***Activity 22-Evaluation***

*Discuss the impact that mining made on the environment in the early days of gold rushes. Was it worth it?*

*An effect that mining has on the environment is that it destroys forest & wetlands. It also means that miners cut down trees just to get to the spot where the gold is underground. Underground coal mining can require people to remove a whole layer of material under the surface. This can cause cracks in river beds.* *Some mining involves the disposal of heavy metals, such as lead, into the atmosphere. This can have serious health effects. When digging, you can destroy & damage good, healthy soil. Also when you’re digging, you can dig past tree roots, destroying trees in just seconds. Mining causes deforestation to rainforests. Vegetation is cut from the land & some people need vegetation to survive. Therefore, digging for gold is not only destroying the environment, it is destroying people’s lives too. Miners can often use a toxic metal called arsenic to separate gold from rock. This contaminates drinking water & kills wildlife when released into the environment. This can kill almost all aquatic life in the area. To answer the final question, was it worth it? Some people need the gold so desperately for their family to survive, so for them, it is worth it. For others who mine for gold to get rich, no it isn’t worth it one little bit. So it depends what’s at stake to find the gold.*